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SOCIALIST DISCUSSION JOURNAL
TOWARDS BETTER UNDERSTANDING

FORUM

Stalin's Accomplices

It was possible to foresee in the very manner in which the Bolshevik party was born the process by which the dictatorship of the proletariat would be transformed into the dictatorship of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and its Politburo, then into the dictatorship of the Secretariat, and finally into the tyranny of a single man.

Commenting on the Bolshevik-Menshevik split at the Social-Democratic Congress of 1903, Leon Trotsky pointed out that Lenin's methods would lead to a state of affairs where "the Party organization is substituted for the Party, the Central Committee is substituted for the organization, and finally dictatorship is substituted for the Central Committee." And Georgi Plekhanov, the intellectual mentor of both Lenin and Trotsky, predicted in 1905 that "in the end everything will revolve around a single man, who, *ex providentia*, will centralize all power in himself."

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After Lenin's death his closest aides spoke with undisguised passion of the need for collective leadership. Zinoviev addressed the Fifth Congress of the Comintern (1924): "... the international leadership must become more collective ..." he said, "Lenin is no more; we must create a collective organ, an organ of iron that will really play a guiding role and embody the collective mind of all the parties." And in 1927 at the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party, Stalin himself praised the leadership in the following terms: "... our Central Committee and our Control Commission ... are one of the most democratic and collectively functioning centers that our Party has ever had ..."

Three years after the death of Stalin, however, Krushchev chose to give the world a different picture of the Communist Party: for twenty-five years, he told his audience, there did *not* exist a collective leadership in the party. Stalin made all the decisions himself. Stalin committed monstrous, despicable crimes—by himself. Stalin sent thousands of innocent Communists to their death—by himself, without the concurrence of his closest "comrades-in-arms." Stalin fostered a cult of himself—without the approval of the members of his Politburo. Stalin was a despot, a megalomaniac, a paranoid—but they, the "Leninist core of the Central Committee"—were merely his hapless victims.

Is this picture true? Is it true that this very man, absolutely devoid of prestige at the time of Lenin's death, usurped the power of life and death over a population of some two hundred million souls through his own personal machinations, stealthily, furtively, unbeknownst to others? The answer is simple: No. Stalin did not attain his exalted position all by himself—he had accomplices.

Of the several men now in the "collective leadership," Lazar Kaganovitch, as the chief artisan of Stalin's extraordinary political fortune, deserves special attention. A cobbler by trade, and himself a Jew,

Kaganovitch first attracted attention by his inflexible hostility toward Jewish labour organizations, particularly the *Bund* and the Socialist-Zionists. After the February-March Revolution he was sent by the Saratov Soviet to Petrograd, where he rose to membership on the Executive Committee of the Soviet. In 1918 he was sent to Nizhni-Novogrod as chief of the local Communist and Soviet organs, and here he met Nikolai Bulganin, then an obscure official in the regional Cheka. In Voronezh in 1919 Kaganovitch came to the attention of Stalin, who immediately recognized his real talents as an organizer. In June, 1922, Kaganovitch was chosen chief of the Central Committee's Organization and Instruction Section. From that time until Stalin's death in March, 1953, Kaganovitch was the decisive instrument of Stalin's will to power.

At first his usefulness to Stalin was as chief of the Organization and Instruction Section, for this section controlled the vote of all party functionaries. At Kaganovitch's will party personnel were placed, transferred or fired. Working through Kaganovitch, Stalin was able by transfers, demotions, and promotions to remove all human barriers to his ambitions and to reward those who were ready to follow him blindly. Stalin was able to form the local and regional directing committees to his own liking, and in this manner he attained control over the party conferences and congresses. Soon he had collected the power to begin the reign of terror which crushed all inclination to resist the establishment of totalitarian despotism.

Kaganovitch rose in rank from year to year. In 1924 he became a member of the Central Committee, holding the position of secretary (under Stalin) until 1925. In 1926 Kaganovitch became an alternate member of the Politburo; in 1930 he became a full member. Stalin recalled him to the party secretariat in 1928 and Kaganovitch remained there till 1939, taking over a number of other functions, among them, from 1930 to 1935, that of first secretary of the Moscow Regional Party Committee. In this latter

capacity he placed Malenkov at the head of the cadre section and had Bulganin elected president of the Moscow Soviet. At that time Kaganovich singled out a lowly militant, Nikita Khrushchev, to be secretary of the district (*rayon*), and in 1935 Khrushchev succeeded him in the secretariat of the Moscow Regional Committee. Kaganovich went on to hold a series of top-level posts: Commissar of Communications (1935-1944), Commissar of Heavy Industry (1937), Commissar of the Fuel and of the Petroleum Industries (1939), as well as many others. In all of these posts Kaganovich distinguished himself by his ruthless implementation of Stalin's every order. By the time Stalin died Kaganovich had risen to be a member of the Party Presidium and also First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Although he collaborated with Stalin for nearly 30 years Molotov's biography is incomparably duller than Kaganovich's. Whether as Secretary of the party, Chairman of the Council of Commissars, or as Commissar or Minister of Foreign Affairs, he participated in all the crimes that the "collective leadership" is now denouncing—but so slavishly as to make his role almost tedious to detail. Some reproach him especially for his role in concluding the pact with Hitler, in the talks with Ribbentrop, in the partition of Poland, for his trip to Berlin during the war, his protestations of friendship towards the Nazis and insolent enmity toward the liberal democracies. But his complicity with Stalin was total—no greater in one case than in any other.

Voroshilov, whom Stalin raised to the rank of People's Commissar for War and membership in the Politburo, might likewise tell of long and complete complicity with Stalin. More than anyone else Voroshilov is responsible for the legend of Stalin's military genius, especially by his signing of a shameless apologia entitled "Stalin and the Red Army" (1929) and by his subsequent mendacious articles, primarily "Stalin, Builder of the Red Army" (1939) and "A Genius as Leader in the Great Patriotic War" (1949). Small wonder that Voroshilov praised Stalin so lavishly—for he had a hand in all Stalin's crimes, especially in the purge of more than 30,000 officers. And now the crowning irony—Khrushchev invites Voroshilov to muster the courage to write the truth about Stalin—that is, to discredit the "genius as leader"!

Mikoyan's career, like that of Molotov or Voroshilov, owes nothing directly to Kaganovich. He served under Stalin as Secretary of the North Caucasus Regional Committee at a time when Voroshilov was the commander of that military district. Transferred to Moscow in 1926, Mikoyan was promoted to alternate in the Politburo and assumed the post of Commissar of Commerce. A full member of the Politburo in 1935, he became vice-chairman of the Council of Commissars in 1937, i.e., at the height of Stalin's terrorism, and he retained that post through all the sinister turns of Stalin's reign.

Add to the four oldest accomplices of the dead tyrant the three above-mentioned protégés of Kaganovich: Bulganin, Malenkov, and Khrushchev.

Bulganin, going from the regional Cheka of Nizhni Novgorod to the central Cheka in Moscow, devoted himself especially to discipline in the army, in which capacity he came into intimate contact with Voroshilov. After the Civil War Bulganin held posts in many high-level economic agencies, and then presided over the Moscow Soviet, working in close collaboration with Kaganovich and Khrushchev. He was rewarded for his loyalty during the terrible purges of 1936-38 with the position of deputy chairman of the Council of Commissars, in which capacity he held various important jobs. During the war he carried out some of Stalin's most diabolical schemes, among them the abominable provocation of the Warsaw uprising, which the Nazis were able to drown in seas of Polish blood. Stalin rewarded him by appointing him an alternate (1946) and then a full member of the Politburo (1948) and also (in 1947) Minister of the Armed Forces.

Malenkov had also gained the favour of the "morbid monster," as George Kennan has dubbed Stalin. It would be tiresome to detail his career as a Stalinist official and police aide from his debut in the cells of the institutions of higher learning to the post of personal secretary to Stalin and the leadership of the Central Committee's cadre section. He was an alternate (1941), then a member (1946) of the Politburo. He became a member of the Central Committee in 1939. Stalin appointed him to a number of posts—especially during the war—notably in the Defense Committee, and finally in the Secretariat of the Party (1946), from which he was dislodged only after the death of Stalin. For nearly a quarter of a century he shared the collective complicity of Stalin's successors.

Khrushchev is the same type of leader of which Kaganovich is the prototype. A worker lightly dusted with pseudo-Marxist instruction in a School for Workers, the *Encyclopædia* edited in Moscow in 1955, says of him that he was "one of Stalin's closest companions in arms," a title which henceforth no one will envy him. After a period at the Industrial Academy he held various positions in the Moscow Party under Kaganovich, whom he succeeded in 1935; in 1938 he was sent to the Ukraine to replace Stanislav Kossior as Secretary of the Party. In the Ukraine he held different high-level party and government posts, and in 1949 Stalin elevated him to the position of Secretary of the party in Moscow. In 1939 he was admitted to the Politburo, having been an alternate member since 1938 and having been admitted to the Central Committee in 1934, which gives some idea of the services he rendered Stalin. After the latter's death he supplanted Malenkov as First Secretary of the party and became the spokesman for "collective leadership."

As such, at the Twentieth Congress, he pronounced the famous indictment of Stalin.

He denounced Stalin "monstrosities," the crimes and tortures, saying of Beria, his erstwhile colleague: "That criminal scaled the various echelons by stepping on an enormous number of cadavers." But that is likewise true of Khrushchev himself, of Kaganovich, of Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Bulganin, and Malenkov. Which of their names would be known to-day if they had not contributed to the extermination of Lenin's comrades? They are all perched on mountains of corpses, all accomplices of Beria and his predecessors Yezhov and Yagoda—they are all accomplices of Stalin.

Reprinted from "Problems of Communism" (U.S.A.)

BORIS SOUVARINE.

Book Review

EROS AND CIVILISATION

A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud

(Routledge & Kegan Paul, 25s.)

HERBERT MARCUSE has written an interesting and important book, although it is rather difficult to follow in places unless one is accustomed to Freudian phraseology. The work abounds in such terms as Ego, Eros, Oedipus Complex, Sublimation, etc.

Marcuse is not a strict Freudian. The dust jacket tells us that:

"This important and original contribution starts from Freud's thesis (particularly in *Civilization and its Discontents*) that civilization requires the permanent subjugation of men's instinctual drives, the methodical sacrifice and deflection of libido—in short, the rigid restriction of the 'pleasure principle.'

"Marcuse questions this thesis on the ground of Freud's own theory and on the ground of the possibilities of mature civilization. He believes that the very existence of civilization depends on the gradual abolition of instinctual constraint, on the strengthening of the life instincts, and on the liberation of the culture-building power of Eros.

"Marcuse holds that the achievements of Western civilization have created the pre-conditions for the emergence of a non-repressive civilization, and he attempts to show sociological and psychological trends which make for such a development."

Marcuse only uses such terms as Socialism or Capitalism once or twice in his book, preferring such terms as "industrial civilization" or "a truly free civilization." For exploitation, he says "domination." And yet most of the book is a critical analysis of modern capitalism, with its antagonisms, repressions, tendencies towards totalitarianism and basic contradictions. His alternative: a non-repressive, non-dominated society where all instinctual needs are satisfied . . . a free civilization!

"PEN."

SCOTT FITZGERALD

It is a convenient fact that American outlook in recent years, and consequently American Literature, can be divided fairly accurately into decades—the 'twenties, the 'thirties and the 'forties. After the first world war, the first period takes us to the financial crash and the depression, and the next lasts until the beginning of the second world war.

The 'twenties were remarkable years in American history, and the films, plays and books of the period bear convincing testimony of the post-war disillusionment, the denial of former moral values, and the gangsterism and political corruption of the time. It was an age of bitterness and frustration, but a frustration that was expressed, at least among the middle and upper classes, by wildness and irresponsibility. Hip flasks, cocktail parties, speakeasies, petting parties, flappers and jazz-mania were all aspects of this breakdown of pre-war values.

As far as literature is concerned, the most significant spokesman of the age was F. Scott Fitzgerald, who actually gave the period its name—"the Jazz Age." Fitzgerald himself was one of that class fresh from Princeton or Yale, who found themselves pushed into a war whose causes they were unable to appreciate. The war over, they found life unreal and purposeless. The sons of the rich families, or poorer boys infected by the easy money ideology, they had no time for the outmoded doctrines of Carnegie or Rockefeller exhorting them to "win wealth by hard work." The pace of life for them quickened until it became a crazy merry-go-round that crashed to the ground with the stock market in 1929.

Fitzgerald's earlier novels, "The Beautiful and Damned" and "The Far Side of Paradise," are skilful and often moving accounts of the emptiness and pointlessness into which these people's lives were channelled. They do show, on Fitzgerald's part, a struggle to express himself and also to express the frustration of his age. Although not a "social critic" in the direct sense, he became a far more important social critic in the sense that he accurately presented the lives of people in this situation, of whom he was one, and consequently made the greater impression. The first novel is an account of the childhood, schooling, and college days of one of these sons of the rich, and the second is almost a continuation, dealing with the lives of a young man and a flapper, and their hardening by the conditions of the futile world that they knew.

The focal point in Fitzgerald's career was "The Great Gatsby." Although some might

argue that it is not his best novel, it is certainly the hub of his work. The early works look forward to it, and the latter ones seem to refer back to it. It is the story of an ambitious nobody, Jay Gatsby, who achieves his riches by racketeering, and becomes almost a legend in the display and extravagance of his parties and style of living. His tragedy is basically that of all the people around him—they have not what they want, and do not even know what it is they want. The irony of the novel is that in spite of Gatsby's lavish hospitality and the enormous parties that he gives, he is almost completely friendless, and his funeral produces only two mourners—the one friend who tries to help Gatsby find his desires, and one out of the thousands of people who had taken Gatsby's hospitality.

The novel is much tighter in construction than the earlier works, and has a much more stimulating plot. The narrator is Gatsby's friend, and, because it is the view of an outsider looking in, the tragedy is made the more intense.

This was a period when current psychological thought had a considerable effect on American, and other literature. Fitzgerald himself, although sufficiently interested in Freudian psychology to make extensive use of it in his novel "Tender Is The Night," never closely examined the background of the life of his characters, and never enquired into the basic motives and causes that gave rise to them. It could be said that this is the secret of Fitzgerald's success as a writer. He does no more than honestly and skilfully depict the lives of people as he knew them, and for this reason his characters and situations have far more conviction and applicability to life than the intentional propaganda works of writers such as Upton Sinclair or Jack London.

"Tender Is The Night," has been regarded by many literary critics as a failure, although Fitzgerald himself thought highly of it. In order to overcome what he considered to be the main flaws in construction, he revised the form of the novel in 1940, and it was subsequently published in this form (it is available in Penguins). The latter version certainly seems to have gained clarity and interest, but the basic faults remain, that is, the veering between an onlooker's view and the writer's omniscience, and a tendency to over-complicate the story by an unnecessary wealth of characters and incident.

This novel takes us from the world of flappers and speakeasies to the world of the older rich expatriates at play on the Riviera,

and having their psychological problems sorted out at the clinics of Zurich. Even if it does not come up to Fitzgerald's intention of making it the best American novel of the century, it certainly presents a superb and engrossing picture of the lives of these people.

Fitzgerald's last and unfinished work, "The Last Tycoon" (published in 1941 in a form edited by Edmund Wilson), reverts to the earlier successful method of "Gatsby" and the story is told through the eyes of Cecelia Brady, a daughter of a Hollywood producer. Here also, we have a story of tragic failure, this time of a "wonder-boy" producer of the order of Irving Thalberg. Many of the characters are recognisably real-life Hollywood titans, and the book represents the most convincing and authentic account of Hollywood in literature (with the possible exception of Nathanael West's satire, "The Day Of The Locust"). In possessing this authenticity, it becomes a damning indictment of the American film factory, and clearly indicates that the horrors of "The Big Knife" and "The Day Of The Locust" are no exaggerations.

Some of Fitzgerald's short stories, too, well repay attention. Many of them are trite and banal, and were produced not as a labour of love, but merely as a means to provide the wherewithal to pay for an extravagant existence. On the other hand, some of them are brilliantly contrived, and rank with the novels as examples of efficient and persuasive writing. "May Day" or "The Diamond As Big As The Ritz" are stories which favourably bear comparison with any American short story writing of the period. The best of the stories are published in a collection entitled "Borrowed Time."

As with many other novelists, much of Fitzgerald's work is plainly autobiographical. The first two novels are apparently based on his early life at Princeton and after, and even in his later works, the echoes of his own existence are apparent. Dick Diver's failure in "Tender Is The Night" is a reflection of Fitzgerald's own failure in life, and even the reference to Diver's publication of a "popular" work on psychology and the perennially unfinished treatise, seems to indicate a conscience troubled by the glib short stories that Fitzgerald turned out in order to raise easy money, at the expense of his serious work.

"The Last Tycoon" too, reflects Fitzgerald's own experiences in Hollywood. With regard to this part of his life, "The Disenchanted" by Budd Schulberg, is based on Scott Fitzgerald's experiences as a script

writer, and is well worth reading as a novel, in addition to the light that it throws on Fitzgerald's life and Hollywood generally.

A competent biography of Fitzgerald—"The Other Side Of Paradise" by Arthur Mizener, also makes interesting reading, and helps considerably in an appreciation of Fitzgerald's work, as does a collection of notes and observations entitled "The Crack-Up," which also gives an insight into the tragedy of Fitzgerald's last days. Fitzgerald's

life, like those of his heroes, was a failure. Like so many of his contemporaries, he saw his age, tied to a thriving industrial and financial giant, come crashing down in 1929, and after this he never again really got to grips with the world. He suffered nervous breakdowns, mainly caused through heavy drinking, and eventually died in 1940.

So much then, for the work of an absorbing writer, who in the words of Frederick Hoffman in "The Modern Novel in

America," "was successful beyond all of his contemporaries in keeping his work free of the pretentious intellectual faking that has handicapped so much of American fiction since Norris and Dreiser." In spite of all his flaws, Fitzgerald sums up an age of capitalism in an entertaining and stimulating way, which is more than can be said for nine-tenths of the so-called social historians.

A.W.I.

The Sexes in a New Society

We cannot lay down detailed plans of life under Socialism, including the relation between the sexes. Each of us can, however, foreshadow in a general way what we believe is likely to happen on the basis of our particular knowledge—an perhaps our wishes.

I am concerned with the average member of society: that is, with the bulk of the people.

The generation that steps into Socialism is bound to carry with it a crop of rubbish inherited from the past. The breaking of existing restraints may also lead to exaggerations before the pendulum swings back, as happened for instance in the French Revolution and the Russian upheaval.

We must not judge the future by the shape of the present. Habits and ways, ideas of pleasure and luxury, views of conduct and personal relations, born out of the cramping conditions of the present, will disappear under the free and co-operative conditions of the future. In sex relations there will be a freedom and broadness of choice for each that is absent to-day.

The dipsomaniac, the drug addict, the glutton and the sex fanatics are products of systems of exploitation and sex segregation. Under private ownership systems sex has become largely the subject of the grin and the leer, although it is just as normal a human attribute as eating and drinking.

People and society have evolved in ideas and attitudes. Our feelings and attitudes have become more refined in a variety of ways over the centuries. For example in music, painting, workmanship and relations with each other, in spite of the deadening effect of commercialism and the decline in certain directions of craftsmanship, altruism still flourishes—people risk their lives for

various purposes: scientists, explorers, doctors, nurses and so forth.

Sex love has also evolved—from forms of animal promiscuity to forms of human monogamy. Consideration of the forces that brought about this change are outside the present subject; we simply note the fact. Evolution will still go on because the present monogamous forms are not the end.

Social development takes the form of a spiral: it returns, but above the starting points. Thus society will return to a form of communism that will be immeasurably above the communism of tribal society. Sex love has undergone centuries of development; it will not disappear but will flower in a form impossible to-day with the ties that bind it.

Mutual respect will be the basis of future sex union. To be successful, each will have to inspire a conviction of worthiness and hence will strive to be acceptable in that sense to the loved one.

To-day most women are in a more or less dependent position and hence put up with a good deal that they would not accept under free conditions. Likewise, most men are more or less dependent on having "someone to look after the home and the children."

There is an attitude current to sneer at love as outmoded. This is mistaken, for love is real, so real that is sometimes makes asses of us all. Take for example the instance of Nelson, Parnell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Eleanor Marx and Edward VIII. In these instances, sacrifices were made on the altar of love. Will the emotion die when the sacrifice is not necessary? Surely it will be stronger under Socialism where it will have greater scope and where, if incompatibility

does occur, the bonds of union will be severed as a matter of course and without suffering.

Nowadays cynical young people are inclined to gibe at love and extol the merits of promiscuity, but as an onlooker I have noticed that they go to heaven or hell much as we did in our day.

The merely animal desire for indiscriminate sexual intercourse is a product of brutish conditions and not a physiological necessity. It will not persist under the refined conditions of Socialism, where there will be no obstacles to loving and being loved, and hence no need for an artificial outlet for natural emotions.

Idleness, over-eating, over-drinking and unhealthy conditions are generally the basis of brutish desires. Our sex information is mostly gained in the gutter and is tinged with the gutter afterwards.

Unbalanced eating and drinking are recognized as such, but lack of balance in sex relations is largely unrecognized. All excess is harmful, and people bent on making the best out of life will avoid it when conditions allow them to do so.

Sexual excess exists among the leisured class more than among the poor because the former live artificial lives without an incentive to healthy activity. Socialism offers them salvation also.

The *Memoirs of Count Grammont* gives a picture of the sexual promiscuity of our nobility during the seventeenth century that illustrates the effects of idleness and luxury.

There is another form of excess that is cultivated because it is thought to be "advanced," or a sign of cleverness or artiness.

With the coming of Socialism, boys and girls and men and women will be able to walk into the sunshine of love without mercenary or other obstacles to bar their way. They will love each other with an intensity, a constancy and a mutual respect that are beyond our reach to-day.

One sole principle will determine their association—mutual wishes. Whether or not they will live together is problematical.

The monogamic family will change, but this does not mean that relations between the sexes will parallel the promiscuity of animals—though even this is overestimated.

When the most intimate relations are free of the fear of consequences then these relations will be based on mutual desire and respect.

Mutual desire originates in admiration or esteem in one form or another—beauty, intellect, harmony of inclinations and so forth. Such passions do not arise and pass in a moment but last long or short according to the individuals involved. Where everyone is free to love and change his or her association at will, the passion is likely to be more lasting than it so often is now.

Under the new free social conditions all will enjoy the bloom, the charm and the smile of life, and the drab, the toil and the tears will vanish—in sex relations as in all other relations.

GILMAC.

These are the notes of a lecture given to members at Gloucester Place in 1941. I have looked at the notes again and still hold the views set forth!

MODERN PUBLICITY

A recent FORUM article commented on the extent to which female legs are featured in the popular press. A Party wit, noticing a display of nine pairs of legs recently, thought what a marvellous opportunity of publicity it offered if we could afford a few minutes on commercial T.V. If the letters "S-O-C-I-A-L-I-S-T" were displayed on each left leg of the ballerinas and the letters "S-T-A-N-D-A-R-D-4d." on each right leg, the *Socialist Standard* would get some notice. Regretfully we have to report that this form of publicity would be too expensive. We have to confine ourselves to more modest methods. We would, however, like to increase our efforts in the advertising, and other fields. The Party Treasurer will gladly receive, and acknowledge, all donations.

Study Class Notes

The Reformation

The economic and social background (see also "Merchant Capitalism" syllabus).

The Crusades. Discoveries and Inventions. Fall of Constantinople. The Revival of Learning. The Printed Word. The general decay of Feudalism. Rise of Centralised State and Nation. Rise of Capitalism.

The Religious Change. Wealth and Power of Gt. Med. Church. Its Feudal Character. The spread of heresy. Albigenses, Lollards, Hussites, etc.

The Reformation in Germany. Luther's attack on Church. Its popularity. The peasant's war. The princes—the burghers—the emperor. Luther's support of princes.

The Reformation in England. Policy of Henry VIII. Dissolution of Monasteries and the game of plunder. The National Church. The spread of Calvinism. Its bourgeois and republican character.

The Reformation and counter-Reformation in other lands.

Protestantism and economic individualism. Individual judgment. Revolt against authority "The Calling." Predestination and economics. Thrift and work. Bourgeois property and religious ideals.

The Purpose of Reformation. The adaptation of religious ideas and institutions of feudalism to the economic needs and interests of capitalism.

Books of Reference: Smith—The Age of Reformation. Engels—Fuerbach. Flick—Decline of Mediæval Church. Robertson—Economic Individualism.

The Puritan Revolution

The Political and Economic Situation. Class divisions. The use of State machinery by large landowners and Monarchy. Grievances of trading and capital farmer class need to control State to promote interests of rising capitalism. Political unity of commercial elements. Conflict clothed in religious guise.

The Armed Conflict. The immediate causes of Civil War. Roundheads and Cavaliers. The rich House of Commons. Parliament's control over finance. The military struggle. Cromwell. The new Model Parliament and the Army. Defeat of the Royalists.

The Commonwealth. Parliamentary Policy. Social policy. Dictatorship of Cromwell. The Restoration and its significance.

Democratic elements in the struggle. Lilburne and Levellers. Winstanley and the Digger Movement.

Function of the Puritan Revolution. The achievement of political supremacy by the trading and producing capitalist class together with its ally, the small capitalist landowners.

Books of Reference: Pease—The Leveller Movement. Trevelyan—England under the Stuarts. Berens—The Digger Movement. Bernstein—Cromwell and Communism. Gardiner—The Civil War in England.

ARE YOU
ATTENDING
HEAD OFFICE
EDUCATIONAL
CLASSES ?

The Soul of Man under Socialism

Most people think of Oscar Wilde as the writer of *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, *The Importance of Being Ernest* or that great poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Few think of him as a propagandist of socialism, or even a revolutionary thinker. Very few have taken seriously an essay written in 1891—*The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, and yet this short work has much to commend it.

Wilde was not a “professional revolutionary”; he had little understanding of economics, and had probably never read a word of Marx. He was a “Utopian.” Still, even to-day, *The Soul of Man* is worth reading—even by scientific socialists.

Socialism and Reformism.

Wilde was no reformer. Of the “very advanced” school of reformers he said: “They try to solve the problem of poverty, for instance, by keeping the poor alive”; or, he added, by amusing the poor. But, he continued, this is not the solution to the problem of poverty—it is an aggravation. Accordingly, with admirable, though misdirected, intentions, they very seriously and very sentimentally set themselves the task of remedying the evils that they see. But their remedies do not cure the disease: they merely prolong it. Indeed, their remedies are part of the disease.”

Wilde also felt that the worst slave-owners were those who were most kind to their slaves, who were the most altruistic and charitable, as they prevented the horrors of the system being realized by those who suffered from them. “Charity,” he wrote, “creates a multitude of sins.” The only real and lasting answer to poverty was to reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty would be impossible; to establish Socialism (or Communism) where “each member of the society will share in the general prosperity and happiness of the society . . .”

Individualism and Authority.

By converting private property into common property and substituting co-operation for competition, society will become a healthy organism; it will give life its

proper basis, its proper environment. Socialism, thought Oscar Wilde, will lead to Individualism, or what we would probably term “individuality”—the free expression and development of each individual in his society. Socialism would be, must be, a completely free society, a way of life free from authority and coercion. He saw authority and compulsion as the negation of a society of free individuals, as the enemy of “Individualism.” He writes:—

“What is needed is Individualism. If the Socialism is Authoritarian; if there are governments armed with economic power as they are now with political power if, in a word, we are to have Industrial Tyrannies, then the last state of man will be worse than the first. At present, in consequence of the existence of private property, a great many people are enabled to develop a certain very limited amount of Individualism. They are either under no necessity to work for a living, or are enabled to choose the sphere of activity that is really congenial for them, and gives them pleasure. These are the poets, the philosophers, the men of science, the men of culture—in a word, the real men, the men who have realized themselves, and in whom all Humanity gains a partial realization.”

But the great majority, says Oscar Wilde, have no property; they are compelled to do uncongenial work, “and to which they are forced by the peremptory unreasonable, degrading tyranny of want. They are the poor . . .” Later in the essay Wilde returns to this lack of Individualism in our present-day society and the dangers of authoritarianism in future society. For, he says:—

“It is clear . . . that no Authoritarian Socialism will do. For while under the present system a very large number of people can lead lives of a certain amount of freedom and expression and happiness, under an industrial-barrack system, or a system of economic tyranny, nobody would be able to have any freedom at all

... Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others.”

Wilde thought that private property had crushed “Individualism” and the creative spirit in general. But, with the abolition of private property, there would be a healthy and beautiful Individualism; for no one would waste his life accumulating things and symbols of things. Most people exist, but in a socialist world they would really live.

Here Wilde runs parallel with Engels when the latter says that with the seizing of the means of production by society, man for the first time emerges from mere animal conditions into really human ones—from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. “Man, at last the master of his own form of social organization, becomes at the same time lord over Nature and his own master—free” (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*).

Engels and Wilde.

Engels was a “scientific socialist.” He was in the main scientific, analytical, in his approach to social problems. Wilde was not. He saw poverty, degradation, a lack of freedom or “Individualism,” and he did not like it. It revolted him. He looked upon Socialism not only as the solution to the problems thrown up by private property but as something desirable in itself, as something beautiful, ennobling. Engels saw it as the logical outcome of social processes.

But for all that, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* does give us something. It warns us of the dangers of authority; and it gives us a vision of a future society where all can develop their individual capacities quite freely. Wilde was probably the last of the “Utopians”—and the most human. Let us also be a little “utopian” at times. “Progress is the realization of Utopias.”

PETER E. NEWELL.

Before the Communist Manifesto

The following is from Engel's manuscript for a Pamphlet, "Principles of Communism," prepared in 1847. This extract is taken from the edition published by Lanka Samasamaja, of Colombo, Ceylon

Question 1. What is Communism?

Answer. Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

Question 2. What is the proletariat?

Answer. The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labour and does not draw profit from any kind of capital whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depends on the demand for labour, hence on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or the class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the nineteenth century.

Question 3. Proletarians, then, have not always existed?

Answer. No. There have always been poor and working classes, and the working classes have mostly been poor. But there have not always been workers and poor people living under conditions as they are to-day; in other words, there have not always been proletarians, any more than there has always been free unbridled competition.

Question 4. How did the proletariat originate?

Answer. The proletariat originated in the industrial revolution which took place in England in the last half of the last (eighteenth) century, and which has since then been repeated in all the civilised countries of the world. This industrial revolution was precipitated by the discovery of the steam engine, various spinning machines, the mechanical loom, and a whole series of other mechanical devices. These machines, which were very expensive and hence could be bought only by big capitalists, altered the whole mode of production and displaced the former workers, because the machines turned out cheaper and better commodities than the workers could produce with their inefficient spinning wheels and handlooms. The machines delivered industry wholly into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered entirely worthless the meagre property of the workers (tools, looms, etc.). The result was that the capitalists soon had everything in their hands and nothing remained to the workers. This marked the introduction of the factory system into the textile industry.

Once the impulse to the introduction of machinery and the factory system had been given, this system spread quickly to all other branches of industry, especially cloth and book-printing, pottery and the metal industries. Labour was more and more divided among individual workers so that the worker who previously had done a complete piece of work now did only a part of that piece. This division of labour made it possible to produce things faster and cheaper. It reduced the activity of the individual worker to simple, endlessly repeated mechanical motions which could be performed not only as well but much better by a machine. In this way, all these industries fell, one after another, under the dominance of steam, machinery, and the factory system, just as spinning and weaving had already done. But at the same time they also fell into the hands of big capitalists, and their workers were deprived of whatever independence remained to them. Gradually, not only genuine manufacture but also handicrafts came within the province of the factory system as big capitalists increasingly displaced the small master craftsman by setting up huge workshops which saved many expenses and permitted an elaborate division of labour.

This is how it has come about that in civilised countries at the present time nearly all kinds of labour are performed in factories, and in nearly all branches of work handicrafts and manufacture have been superseded. This process has to an even greater degree ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsman; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers, and two new classes have been created which are gradually swallowing up all other classes. These are:

(1) The class of big capitalists, who in all civilised countries are already in almost exclusive possession of all the means of subsistence and of the instruments (machines, factories) and materials necessary for the production of the means of subsistence. This is the bourgeois class, or the bourgeoisie.

(2) The class of the wholly propertyless, who are obliged to sell their labour to the bourgeoisie in order to get in exchange the means of subsistence necessary for their support. This is called the class of proletarians or the proletariat.

Question 5. Under what conditions does this sale of the labour of the proletarians to the bourgeoisie take place?

Answer. Labour is a commodity like any other and its price is therefore determined by exactly the same laws that apply to other commodities. In a regime of big industry or of free competition—as we shall see, the two come to the same thing—the price of a commodity is on the average always equal to its costs of production. Hence the price of labour is also equal to the costs of production of labour. But the costs of production of labour consist of precisely the quantity of means of subsistence necessary to enable the worker to continue working and to prevent the working class from dying out. The worker will therefore get no more for the labour than is necessary for this purpose; the price of labour or the wage will, in other words, be the lowest, the minimum, required for the maintenance of life. However, since business is sometimes better and sometimes worse, it follows that the worker sometimes gets more and sometimes less, just as the industrialist sometimes gets more and sometimes gets less for his commodities. But again, just as the industrialist, on the average of good times and bad, get no more and no less for his commodities than what they cost, similarly on the average the worker gets no more and no less than his minimum. This economic law of wages operates the more strictly the greater the degree to which big industry has taken possession of all branches of production.

Question 6. What working classes were there before the industrial revolution?

Answer. The working classes have always, according to the different stages of development of society, lived in different circumstances and had different relations to the owning and ruling classes. In antiquity, the workers were the slaves of the owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States. In the Middle Ages they were the Serfs of the landowning nobility, as they still are in Hungary, Poland and Russia. In the Middle Ages, and indeed right up to the industrial revolution, there were also journeymen in the cities who worked in the service of petty bourgeois masters. Gradually, as manufacture developed, these journeymen became manufacturing workers who were even then employed by larger capitalists.

Question 7. In what way do proletarians differ from slaves?

Answer. The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class which buys his labour only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the class as a whole. The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries. The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of civil society; the proletarian is recognised as a person, as a member of civil society. Thus the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and himself stands on a higher social level than the slave. The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

Question 8. In what way do proletarians differ from serfs?

Answer. The serf possesses and uses an instrument of production, a piece of land, in exchange for which he gives up a part of his product or part of the services of his labour. The proletarian works with the instruments of production of another, for the account of this other, in exchange for a part of the product. The serf gives up, the proletarian receives. The serf has an assured existence, the proletarian has not. The serf is outside competition, the proletarian is in it. The serf liberates himself in one of three ways: either he runs away to the city and there becomes a handicraftsman, or, instead of products and services, he gives money to his lord and thereby becomes a free tenant, or he overthrows his feudal lord and himself becomes a property owner. In short, by one route or another he gets into the owning class and enters into competition. The proletarian liberates himself by abolishing competition, private property, and all class differences.

Question 9. In what way do proletarians differ from handicraftsmen?

Question 10. In what way do proletarians differ from manufacturing workers?

Answer. The manufacturing worker of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries still had, with but few exceptions, an instrument of production in his own possession—his loom, the family spinning wheel, a little plot of land which he cultivated in his spare time. The proletarian has not of these things. The manufacturing worker almost always lives in the countryside and in a more or less patriarchal relation to his

landlord or employer; the proletarian lives for the most part in the city and his relation to his employer is purely a cash relation. The manufacturing worker is torn out of his patriarchal relation by big industry, loses whatever property he still has, and in this way becomes a proletarian.

Question 11. What were the immediate consequences of the industrial revolution and of the division of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat?

Answer. First, the lower and lower prices of industrial products brought about by machine labour totally destroyed in all countries of the world the old system of manufacture or industry based upon hand labour. In this way, all semi-barbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less strangers to historical development and whose industry had been based on manufacture, were violently forced out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufacturing workers to be ruined. Countries which had known no progress for thousands of years, for example India, were thoroughly revolutionised, and even China is now on the way to a revolution. We have come to the point where a new machine invented in England deprives millions of Chinese workers of their livelihood within a year's time. In this way big industry has brought all the people of the earth into contact with each other, has merged all local markets into one world market, has spread civilization and progress everywhere and has thus ensured that whatever happens in civilised countries will have repercussions in all other countries. It follows that if the workers in England or France now liberate themselves, this must set off revolutions in all other countries—revolutions which sooner or later must accomplish the liberation of their respective working classes.

Second, wherever big industries displaced manufacture, the bourgeoisie developed in wealth and power to the utmost and made itself the first class of the country. The result was that wherever this happened the bourgeoisie took political power into its own hands and displaced the hitherto ruling classes, the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing the entailment of estates, in other words by making landed property subject to purchase and sale, and by doing away with the special privileges of the nobility. It destroyed the power of the guildmasters by abolishing guilds and handicraft privileges. In their place it put competition, that is, a state of society in which everyone has the right to enter into any branch of industry, the only obstacle being a lack of the necessary capital. The introduction of free competition is thus public declaration that from now on the members of society are unequal only to the extent that their capitals are unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that

therefore the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, have become the first class in society. Free competition is necessary for the establishment of big industry, because it is the only condition of society in which big industry can make its way. Having destroyed the social power of the nobility and the guildmasters, the bourgeoisie also destroyed their political power. Having raised itself to the actual position of first class in society, it proclaims itself to be also the dominant political class. This it does through the introduction of the representative system which rests on bourgeois equality before the law and the recognition of free competition, and in European countries takes the form of constitutional monarchy. In these constitutional monarchies, only those who possess a certain capital are voters, that is to say, only members of the bourgeoisie. These bourgeois voters choose the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by using their right to refuse to vote taxes, choose a bourgeois government.

Third, everywhere the proletariat develops in step with the bourgeoisie. In proportion as the bourgeoisie grows in wealth the proletariat grows in numbers. For, since proletarians can be employed only by capital, and since capital expands only through employing labour, it follows that the growth of the proletariat proceeds at precisely the same pace as the growth of capital. Simultaneously, this process draws members of the bourgeoisie and proletarians together into the great cities where industry can be carried on most profitably, and by thus throwing great masses in one spot it gives to the proletarians a consciousness of their own strength. Moreover, the further this process advances, the more new labour-saving machines are invented, the greater is the pressure exercised by big industry on wages, which, as we have seen, sink to their minimum and therewith render the condition of the proletariat increasingly unbearable. The growing dissatisfaction of the proletarian social revolution.

Question 12. What were the further consequences of the industrial revolution?

Answer. Big industry created in the steam engine and other machines the means of endlessly expanding industrial production, speeding it up, and cutting its costs. With production thus facilitated, the free competition which is necessarily bound up with big industry assumed the most extreme forms; a multitude of capitalists invaded industry, and in a short while more was produced than was needed. As a consequence, finished commodities could not be sold, and a so-called commercial crisis broke out. Factories had to be closed, their owners went bankrupt, and the workers were without bread. Deepest misery reigned everywhere.

(To be continued).